
Z-2476
ABDUL-KADER SANKARI, TREASURER OF THE ISLAMIC
SOCIETY OF GREATER LAFAYETTE
A to R1

STAFF REPORT
December 15, 2011

Z-2476

**ABDUL-KADER SANKARI, TREASURER OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY
OF GREATER LAFAYETTE
A to R1**

**Staff Report
December 15, 2011**

REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, with consent of the owner, North American Islamic Trust, Inc., is requesting rezoning of a 10 acre tract from A, Agricultural to R1, Single-family Residential for a proposed community center. Future long-range plans include the possibility of a school for elementary-aged children and a mosque. The site in question is located at the southwest corner of CR 500 N and County Farm Road (CR 50 W) in Wabash 31 (NW) 24-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

The site is zoned A, Agricultural as is surrounding land to the north, west and south; property on the east side of County Farm Road is zoned R1. This same zoning pattern has been in place unchanged since the inception of zoning in the county.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The property in question is unimproved. It is surrounded on the west and south by the single-family homes of Hawthorne Ridge Subdivision. Another single-family subdivision, Shepherd's Pointe, is across the road to the east. St. Andrew's United Methodist Church was completed a couple of years ago to the southeast. There is a single house on property across the county road to the north; beyond these residences and the church, the majority of the land in the vicinity is in crop production. Harrison High School and Burnett Creek Elementary is a half mile to the north.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Both County Farm Road and CR 500 N are classified as secondary arterials by the County *Thoroughfare Plan*. Any driveways serving the property would require permits reviewed and approved by the County Highway Department.

While parking lots in the A zone do not have to be paved, the R1 zone does require paved and striped parking. The required number of parking spaces for a community center is between 15 to 30% of the total permitted occupancy of the building; the final figure is determined by the Administrative Officer (which for this site in the county is the County Building Commissioner). A mosque is required to provide 1 parking space per 4 seats in the portion of the building to be used for services. An elementary school needs

2 spaces per classroom. This ten acre site is large enough that space for meeting parking requirements should not be a problem.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Indiana American Water has a main along CR 500 N so water is available to serve this site. Likewise, sewer is available in the vicinity; American Suburban serves the homes in Hawthorne Ridge and other buildings in the area. Drainage would likely be reviewed by the County Surveyor at the time of building permit issuance since no subdivision of land is being requested.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The ordinance permits “Religious Organizations (SIC 866)” such as churches, temples and mosques, by right in the Agricultural zone. No rezone or public hearing would be necessary for the construction of a religious building. Petitioner stated that their plans are for a community center, a use that is not permitted in the A zone, but would require a special exception from the Board of Zoning Appeals in the requested R1 zone. Elementary schools (another possible future use) are also not allowed in the A zone, but are permitted by right in the R1 district.

Petitioner told staff that the proposed community center would mainly serve the needs of Purdue graduate students and their families. The center would allow “gatherings for religious events, dinners, and youth programs.” In the future it would offer “Sunday School” type instruction for school-aged children. Staff believes the events and programs discussed are typical of what would be expected at any religious building, although the same types of events could also be held at a nonreligious community center. In short, a mosque could be built now, without this rezone request. Most of the proposed uses petitioner has outlined would be permitted under the umbrella of the ordinance’s “Religious Organizations”. But, because petitioner’s timetable requires the community center be constructed first, this rezone to R1 (plus an additional special exception) becomes a necessity.

Regarding the proposed change in zoning for this 10-acre site: R1 zoning exists across the road to the east and is prevalent in the surrounding area. Although the land adjacent to the west and south is not zoned R1, the land use (an established, sewered, single-family subdivision) fits the R1 district better than does its current A designation. Finally, the presence of sewer and water and the site’s location on two heavily traveled county arterials, makes this ten-acre corner less likely to be used agriculturally and instead, makes it ideal for development.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval